Calcutta Library Society - a letter published under the signature of 'Zeno'.

I some time ago attempted to draw the attention of your readers to the existence of the Calcutta Library Society, (which was even unknown to many) and I will now give you some further account of the Institution. I cannot do this better than by relating to you, what passed at a General Meeting of the Proprietors, held a short time since.

It there appears, that the Society is not only out of debt, but the accounts of the Treasurers present a considerable balance in its favour; and if it were to meet cordial and general support, I am certain much public utility would be the result. Many wellwishers to the Society object to the sum required of each person before he becomes a Proprietor, which sum is no less than 200 rupees. But they do not recollect what they will get for their money; for that 200 rupees, they become legally entitled to a share in the property of the Library, which if sold to-morrow would return nearly treble the sum to each Proprietor, and in addition to this, the share they have thus become entitled to, is transferable to a Friend, should the holder of it be obliged to leave the Presidency, and whilst he is absent from it no Monthly Subscription is
demanded from him, yet when he returns again, he may resume his connection with the Institution.

How then can any one complain that this premium of 200 rupees is a sheer loss? I will venture to say, that no one could point out a more eligible mode of disposing of 200 rupees to advantage. Many members of the Institution hold two shares - some three, and one Gentleman whose name I must take the liberty of mentioning, holds no less than four, and this Gentleman is Lieutenant General Sir John McDonald, who, as far as I am able to judge, makes a better use of his money than any man in India, for he is ever ready to support any Institution, which tends to the improvement of his fellow-creatures; and can any one be more entitled to this character than the Calcutta Library Society?

Dr. W. Russell, was President of the Society last year. For the present year the Meeting unanimously resolved to elect Sir John McDonald, as President, and he was consequently called to the Chair. The Society may indeed look up to him as its Father, and I only hope the worthy General will long continue to regard it as his favourite child.
I am anxious to call the attention of the Public to the Institution, because I am strongly impressed with the idea of its utility, and it only requires more general encouragement to become in a short time a Library of great value. It at present contains nearly 5000 volumes, and all these are modern Works, forming a very interesting and respectable collection, but still we are not possessed of many Works of reference; and it were much to be wished, that this might be accomplished. This might, and will, I have no doubt, be done but Gentlemen should come forward and join cordially in the undertaking; and what now appears difficult to a few, would be easy to be accomplished by the aid of many. We have already a balance in our favour, and should this be increased to a respectable sum, it is in contemplation to send it to some person at home to purchase such Books as shall appear to be most wanted in this country; but this is only contemplated, and it is a reproach to the inhabitants of Calcutta, that it is not carried into execution.

Let me hope, that this humble representation may have some effect, and that sense of the utility of the Institution to all classes of society, will induce the heads of that society to take it under their patronage. The rooms granted to the Members of the Institution, by the liberality of the Managers of the Town Hall, are found to
answer the purposes for which they were intended, and a
saving of 1000 rupees per annum to the Society, is the result.
Why not then continue this good work?

It will be satisfactory to those who are concerned in
the welfare of the Institution to learn, that Mr. Richardson
alone now supplies the Library with Books, Mr. Underwood
having given such dissatisfaction to the Society, and so mate-
rially contributed to plunge it into those difficulties from
which the liberality of its Members have now extricated it,
that they even were under the necessity of forbidding him
( Mr. Underwood) to send out any more supplies.

We are now, however, receiving regular and well chosen
selections of Books from the hands of Mr. Richardson, who
appears to deserve the high character he has everywhere
acquired for punctuality and attention. We have thus every
prospect of success and from the attention paid to the busi-
ness of the Library in every department there is no reason
to apprehend future embarrassment. It only remains then for
those Gentlemen who wish to become Members of the Institu-
tion, to send in their names to the Secretary; and for
the small Sum required, they may not only procure an adequate
compensation in the Pleasure they must derive from it themselves, but will be the means of materially assisting the cause of Literature, and effectually promoting public good. - Zeno.

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